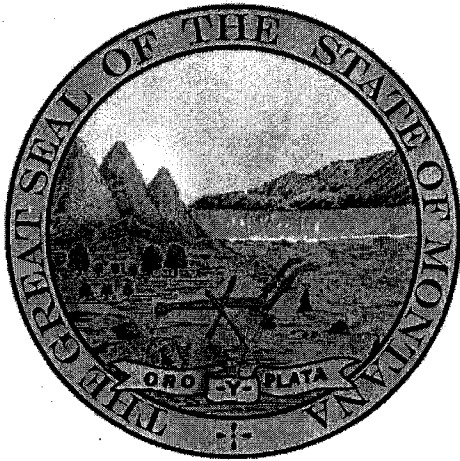


Montana State Legislature

Exhibit Number:

2

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GOVERNOR
BRIAN SCHWEITZER
STATE OF MONTANA

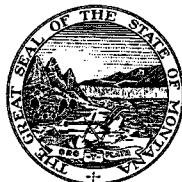
Special Session
September 2007

Governor's Office of Budget
and Program Planning



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
BUDGET AND PROGRAM PLANNING
STATE OF MONTANA

BRIAN SCHWEITZER
GOVERNOR



JOHN BOHLINGER
LT. GOVERNOR

September 1, 2007

Honorable Members of Montana's Sixtieth Legislative Assembly:

Montanans are enduring a difficult and costly fire season. Our fire situation this year is consistent with the trend we have seen for the past several years. Unless our drought conditions improve markedly, we must be prepared for the possibility of another difficult fire season next year.

Protecting public safety is state government's first priority. Hundreds of firefighters, members of the Montana National Guard, and support staff from Montana and across the Nation are fighting these fires. They are protecting our lives, our homes and our livelihoods.

We need to pay for these services. I have called a special session to ask the legislature to appropriate sufficient funds to pay for this season's fire costs and to set aside enough funds to deal with another potentially difficult fire season next summer.

Within our existing statutes on emergency declarations, I am requesting a change with respect only to fires: that from July through October, there is not a 20-day limitation on declaring an emergency or 30 limit on declaring a disaster. I am also requesting that the emergency statutory appropriation be increased from \$16 million for the biennium to \$25 million for the biennium, so that resources are available for Montanans to respond to declared emergencies or disasters, such as fires, floods or earthquakes, without delay.

While we have fund balances, we do not have sufficient appropriation authority. I am asking the legislature to move funds from our saving account to our checking account to pay not only for this year's fire bills, but for those we can reasonably anticipate next year.

I believe this matter can be addressed in a short special session dedicated only to this matter. I look forward to working with you.


BRIAN SCHWEITZER
Governor

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